

## **Regional White House Conference on Aging Post Event Summary Report**

Name of Event: **Regional Pre-White House Conference on Aging Program**

Date of Event: **June 22, 2005**

Location of Event: **Mansfield, Ohio**

Number of Persons attending: **313 people; 60+, 38%; Baby Boomers, 62%**

Sponsoring Organization(s): **Richland Bank, Park Ave. Medical-Michael Byrne Properties**

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### **Priority Issue # 1: Accessible & Reasonable Medication Costs**

#### **Barriers:**

- Laws relating to patents on medications which prolong the availability of generic drugs
- Lack of education on medications and options available
- High cost of malpractice insurance for health care workers
- Lack of politicians working with pharmaceutical companies to address the high cost of medications
- Pension plans that cover medications being eliminated
- Consumers not planning for long-term care needs — including medications
- Lobbyists are influencing the Federal Drug Commission which has impact on the cost of medications
- Lack of one-on-one assistance and education about medications
- Systems accessing medications are too difficult
- Pharmaceutical companies are using too much money on advertising medications
- Income guidelines for medications vary too much and leave consumers without medications
- HIPAA regulations can limit assisting consumers

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Attn: Diane Ramey, PO Box 1978, Mansfield, OH 44901**

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### **Solutions:**

- Advocacy to: Legislators, Regulatory Bodies & Consumers to advocate for themselves
- Developing a simple national program
- More education about medication costs and issues
- Cost caps on how much pharmaceutical companies charge for medications
- Provide funding to educate and assist consumers on Medicare Part D and other medication programs
- Change laws related to the length of time pharmaceutical companies can hold a patent on medications
- Develop ways to recycle unused medications
- Limit advertising of medications
- Simplify programs that provide free or low cost medications (including Medicare)
- Create penalties for companies that drop health care coverage for their retirees

### **Priority Issue # 2: Financial Security through the 21st Century**

#### **Barriers:**

- Too many politics influence the future of current programs
- Medicaid is the single largest source of financing for long-term care and is being subjected to budget cuts
- A decline in the number of workers per Medicare beneficiary and increase in life expectancy
- Too many processes to access government programs
- Special interest groups can slow down progress with programs
- Lack of money to support Medicaid, Medicare and Social Security
- Lack of education about government programs

#### **Solutions:**

- Stabilize the economy

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- Reduce duplication of service to reduce cost of service
- Offer more education about programs that will assist consumers with planning for their financial future
- Strengthen private pension systems
- Education about financial planning for the future
- Debt management programs
- Government needs to put back the money that has been taken from these programs
- Providing family caregivers with financial compensation (tax credits)
- Politicians need to invest the time to resolve issues with Medicaid, Medicare and Social Security
- Developing new resources; Volunteer base, private donations & engage faith based communities in service delivery

### **Priority Issue # 3: Home & Community- Based Care (H&C)**

#### **Barriers:**

- Nursing Homes are able to lobby with legislators
- Income eligibility limits the number of people that can enroll in H&C based care
- Lack of education and publicity for H&C based care
- Rural areas have limited providers to provide home care
- Limited waiver slots for H&C based care
- Restricted funding for H&C based care
- Fragmented and complex service delivery systems
- Lack of sufficient and affordable housing in which to provide H&C based care
- Lack of transportation for H&C based care consumers

#### **Solutions:**

- More education and promotion about H&C based care; Doctors, Churches & Legislators

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- Having one stop sites to access H&C based care
- Medicaid needs to increase the asset limit so homeowners are able to maintain normal maintenance on their home
- Limit fragmentation and complexity of service delivery
- Adjust the income eligibility that allows more consumers to receive H&C based care
- Increase waiver programs that support people in their own home
- Provide incentive programs to increase H&C based care program and service providers, especially in rural areas
- Expand Medicare to provide H&C based care
- Offer incentives to developers that develop low-income 60+ housing units
- Allow family caregivers to be paid for providing care
- Provide tax credits for family caregivers
- Medicare and Medicaid need to pay for Assisted Living as an option
- Provide incentives and opportunity for advancement with home health care workers
- Develop and implement programs that encourage people to enter the health care profession
- Funding needs to follow the consumers vs. funding services or agencies
- The use of technology to assist H&C based care services

### **Priority Issue # 4: Access to Affordable, High Quality Care**

#### **Barriers:**

- No way to compare services and quality
- Variety of specialists make access difficult
- Lack of health care workers; Doctors, nurses & nurses aides
- Lack of gerontologists

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- Lack of centralized system to track complaints
- Doctors not accepting some forms of payment
- Low reimbursement rates for providers
- Insurance companies make accessible and affordable care more difficult
- HIPAA creates too many barriers to access health care and coordination between health care agencies
- Determining what is and is not a good quality health care provider
- Malpractice law suits create higher health care costs
- How to define “quality”
- Older population not considered a priority population
- Education about what is quality health care
- Insufficient training for health care workers
- Some health care jobs have low pay
- Companies eliminating pensions and health care coverage
- Lack of transportation to health care, especially in rural areas
- Limited physical access to facilities
- Eligibility for services allows consumers to fall through the cracks
- Lack of centralized access points for information and services

### **Solutions:**

- Decrease the cost of care
- Develop a national system to track consumer complaints
- Incentives to health care workers to work in rural areas
- Higher education facilities to promote & encourage people to enter the health care profession

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- Better working conditions for health care workers
- Monitor and limit the amount of hours health care workers can work at one time
- Develop a vehicle that would allow consumers to compare quality of care
- A coordinated one-stop service delivery
- Expand transportation services to allow consumers access to health care
- Insurance companies need to simplify the processes to allow access to care
- Evaluate HIPAA rules to allow better coordination and limit duplication of service
- Develop a system of outcomes to better reflect quality care
- Develop controls on malpractice law suites
- Develop a national campaign that will support the 60+ as a priority population